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Thursday, May 7, 2015, 07:59

Sant wants EC deadline to abandon building having asbestos



Labour MEP Alfred Sant has called on the European Commission to set a deadline for the abandonment of the Jean Monnet Building in Luxembourg, currently leased to the EC which houses 1,700 employees, 50 of whom are Maltese nationals, all of whom, he said, are directly exposed to the presence of asbestos.

In a statement, Dr Sant's office said the Commission had confirmed that four cases of asbestos exposure have been recognised as professional illnesses among Commission employees stationed in the Jean Monnet Building. However no date has been set for the abandonment of the building.

Dr Sant said that the EC was taking too long to deal with the asbestos problem at Jean Monnet

."It should have set the example by putting as its topmost priority the safeguarding of its employees," he said.

Replying to a question by Dr Sant in the European Parliament, EC Vice President Kristalina Georgieva said that like most buildings of the 1970s, the Jean Monnet building contained a number of asbestos applications, which did not present identified risks until recently.

During the summer of 2013, an incident took place in the Print Shop during maintenance work, which resulted in a release of asbestos fibres. In the light of this incident, the Commission proceeded with an update of the asbestos inventory, which was completed in November 2013. The main outcome of this update was that a certain form of asbestos present in the JMO had to be considered in the future as brittle due to ageing problems. Several in depth studies were conducted, leading to the decision to abandon the building. This decision was taken by the EC in July 2014 in agreement with the Luxembourgish authorities.

Georgieva said that immediately after the EC decision to abandon the building was taken in mid-July 2014, all services started to work, in close cooperation with the Luxembourgish authorities, in order to identify alternative buildings. The EC has progressed in identifying the premises for this relocation as well negotiating the cost-sharing and organisational modalities of this operation together with the Luxembourgish authorities. The objective is to leave the building as soon as possible and all possible efforts are deployed to accelerate that process.



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